



October 21, 2013

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Cold Weather is Good Reminder that Home Energy Assistance is Available**

*State Expects to Help 215,000 Households with Home Heating Assistance*

As temperatures begin to fall, state officials remind residents that heating assistance is now available through the Home Energy Plus Program from October 1 until May 15, 2014. The state estimates that 215,000 households will receive heating assistance this season, and the average heating benefit is expected to be \$227.

Heat assistance eligibility is based on household income, household size, and the home's heating costs. The Home Energy Plus program pays benefits directly to fuel suppliers to offset the cost of home heating. Crisis assistance, emergency fuel assistance, and emergency furnace repair and replacement for eligible homeowners may also be offered based on household need and funding.

Residents can apply for heating assistance through county social service offices, tribal governments, and private non-profit agencies. Call toll-free **1-866-HEATWIS (432-8947)** or visit the Home Energy Plus [Where to Apply](#) webpage for the local agency in your area. Residents may be eligible if the gross household income is 60% of the state median income level or less.

<b>INCOME GUIDELINES FOR 2013-2014 HEATING SEASON</b>	
Household Size	Annual Income
1	\$24,692
2	\$32,290
3	\$39,887
4	\$47,485
5	\$55,083
6	\$62,680
7	\$64,105
8	\$65,529

Last year 221,963 households received heating assistance with an average benefit of \$337. This season's home energy benefits are based upon a conservative estimate that Wisconsin will receive \$70 million in federal funds, compared to last year's federal funding of \$98.4 million. If the federal government makes additional funds available for the program, the State will be able to help more households and increase the benefits.

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The Wisconsin State Energy Office has observed some positive trends in home heating fuel costs:

- Most Wisconsinites use natural gas to heat their homes—and it costs less due to the low price of domestically-produced natural gas. While prices on the national level are expected to increase, Wisconsin’s utilities purchase natural gas early in the year, allowing them to keep costs down during the heating season.
- Liquefied propane gas (LP or LPG) is used primarily in rural areas where natural gas is not yet available. LP is a co-product of natural gas processing and petroleum refining. While national LP prices are forecasted to increase over last year, the recent development of domestic natural gas in the United States helps to contain costs as the price tracks closer to natural gas and further from oil prices.
- Home-grown fuel sources, such as wood pellets, offer another cost-effective alternative to heating with oil and LP.

**Heating Fuel for Residential Customers in Wisconsin**

October 2012 to March 2013

Heating Fuel	Average Monthly Cost per Household	Average Seasonal Cost per Household
Natural Gas	\$83.62	\$501.71
Wood/Wood Pellets	\$153.30	\$919.78
LP/Propane	\$179.79	\$1,078.76
Heating Oil	\$311.17	\$1,867.02
Electricity	\$374.02	\$2,244.10

The Wisconsin Department of Administration oversees both the [Home Energy Plus](#) program and the [State Energy Office](#).

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